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RUSSIANS AGREE TO MISSILE TALKS

Move Intimated by Soviet

By **RAYMOND H. ANDERSON**
Special to The New York Times

MOSCOW, March 2 — The disclosure today by President Johnson that Premier Kosygin had agreed to discuss a moratorium on deployment of antimissile defenses was foreshadowed by a hint here two weeks ago that the Soviet Government was willing to hold such talks.

In a report tonight on the President's news conference, Tass, the Soviet press agency, made no mention of his remarks on a letter from Premier Kosygin agreeing to talks on a possible antimissile moratorium. The press agency reported only that Mr. Johnson had declared the United States would continue its present course in Vietnam.

The first indication that Moscow might consent to a mutual halt on antimissile projects came Feb. 15, five weeks after President Johnson had urged such a step by Moscow in his State of the Union address.

The President warned that Soviet installation of antimissile defenses might compel the

United States to take counteraction and thereby lead to "an additional waste of resources with no gain in security to either side."

Decision Delayed

Western diplomatic sources here believe that Premier Kosygin still had not decided on a reply to President Johnson's letter when he went to Britain for an official visit early in February.

This view was supported by Mr. Kosygin's remarks on the issue of antimissile defenses at a London news conference Feb. 9.

The premier declined to give a direct answer to a question about the feasibility of a moratorium, but he indicated a negative attitude toward any agreement to halt work on antimissile defenses.

"I think that defensive systems which deter an attack cannot be considered as the cause of arms races, but rather represent a factor preventing the annihilation of people," Mr. Kosygin said then.

Six days later, Pravda, the Soviet Communist party newspaper, interpreted Premier Kosygin's remarks in a way that suggested Moscow was willing to enter negotiations on an antimissile moratorium.

"Speaking at a news conference in London, Premier Aleksei N. Kosygin declared that the Soviet Government was ready to discuss the problem of averting a new arms race, both in offensive and defensive weapons," Pravda said.

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